



Canyon Field Schools - Frequently Asked Questions

What will be provided for my child during their stay? We provide all the food and camping supplies for the duration of the trip. All meals are provided for during their stay at the canyon. If your child has any dietary or food restrictions *please* indicate that on their medical form that is sent in before they arrive so we can plan accordingly. Tents, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, blankets, kitchen supplies, and backpacking packs are all provided. Please check the packing list for more information on what to pack.

How qualified are the staff members working with my child? All park rangers are required to pass comprehensive federal background checks to be employed by the National Park Service. They also all have multiple years of experience working with youth in the front and backcountry. Have personal and professional outdoor experience including backpacking and rafting in Grand Canyon. As well they all have a college degree in natural sciences and or education.

How is the health and safety of my child addressed? Park rangers will be available to your child 24 hours a day. They are all trained in dealing with wilderness medical issues including first aid and CPR. The South Rim Village also has a full clinic with doctors that are accessible all the time. If the program you signed your child up for enters Grand Canyon they will always be accompanied with rangers trained in wilderness first aid and will be carrying radios and satellite phones if a rescue becomes necessary.

What if my child is on some kind of medication? Please indicate any and all medications on your child's medical form. Conditions such as sun exposure and high temperatures or cold water immersion may require a recalibration of your current dosage. We encourage you to **consult your physician** before your trip if you are taking any medication. Please bring two sets of your medication (double the amount per length of trip: 2 week trip= 4 weeks of medication). *Backcountry trips are not the place to take a break from medications; the backcountry can enhance or compound medical and/or emotional conditions.*

What if my child has no hiking/camping experience? That is just fine; all are welcome on our programs. We design our programs to be accessible to everyone and work as a team to ensure that everyone has a safe, fun, and successful experience camping and hiking in and around Grand Canyon.

How often will my child have access to showers? Depending on how long they are here they will have access to 1 shower a week. In the backcountry the chances can be less. For youth on river portions they do have a chance to bathe in the river if they want to. They are required to use biodegradable soaps in the river and the water is very cold (~50 degrees). For the showers on the rim they do cost \$2 for 9 minutes.

What about restrooms? On the rim and in the canyon they will have access to a few options for restrooms. The most commonly accessible type is the typical pit toilet found throughout the park including places along the inner canyon trails. There are flush toilets available on the rim in the village area. The other most common toilet used at the rim campsite and for the duration of the river is something known as a "groover". This is a product of river rafting culture and is a large military ammo can fitted with a toilet seat. All of these facilities are cleaned daily.

(see other side for more information)

Grand Canyon

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park
Arizona



Will my child have access to their cell phone? No. We are encouraging youth to have a true wilderness experience which means unplugging them from the distractions of modern technology so that they can fully immerse themselves in the experience. *This includes MP3 players and tablets.* Rangers do carry radios, satellite phones, and work cell phones for emergency situations. There is also no coverage below the edge of the canyon. Expect to have zero contact with your child during their stay in Grand Canyon National Park. If you need to contact them for emergency reasons it will be possible by calling the rangers. Your child will need cell phones for travel to and from the park but during the program we will take the phones and secure them in a locked temperature controlled place. Tablets and phones cannot be used as cameras, bring a disposable or digital camera. For river portions we recommend water proof disposables over digital cameras.

What are the conditions like on the rim of Grand Canyon and inside it? Grand Canyon can be a world of extremes so it is best to be prepared for many different types of conditions. The South Rim of Grand Canyon sits at approximately 7000 feet in elevation. The temperatures in the summer range from 50-90 degrees on average. In late July through September we also enter our monsoon season where we expect rain almost every day. The North Rim is over 1000 feet higher than the South Rim in elevation so the temperatures are even colder. The opposite is true for the inner canyon. The inner canyon is 15-25 degrees hotter on average than either rim because of the lower elevation. In the summer it routinely gets over 100 degrees at the bottom and escaping the sun isn't always possible. For participants on river portions the constant wet to dry conditions can also dry out their feet and skin so caring for your body and feet in those portions is also important. Check the packing list and/or our Hike Smart website for more information:
(<http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/hike-smart.htm>)

Should my child prepare physically before coming? If your child is going to be entering Grand Canyon some level of fitness is highly encouraged. Youth who are actively engaged in sports, hiking, and fitness will likely do just fine. We design these programs to equally challenge the participants but also allow them to be successful. For that reason we do stagger our larger hikes over multiple days so they can do it at a more moderate pace and enjoy the beauty of the inner canyon. We do highly encourage your child to prepare physically before coming through at least 2-4 mile hikes or trying to run when they can. *If you are bringing new boots or hiking shoes on the trip break them in before arriving* otherwise they will likely get blisters or have feet problems. Check the Hike Smart link from the last question for more info. For participants on the river portion you will also need to bring water shoes of some kind; we recommend the brands Chaco and Keens but others will likely work just fine.

If my child is flying into Arizona what should they expect? We will pick participants up from the Flagstaff Airport. Plan to have them arrive by 1:30 on the day of their trip.

If I am driving my child where should we go? We will pick the rest of the participants up from the Coconino Building in Flagstaff; it is the Forest Service's headquarters for the region. Plan to be there around 2pm. Their address is: 1824 Thompson Street, Flagstaff, AZ 86001.

If you have any more questions or concerns do not hesitate to call us at (928)638-7924 or email us at grand_canyon_field_schools@nps.gov

(see other side for more information)